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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 003025

SIPDIS

NSC FOR CBARTON
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/25/2014
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: MFA RESPONDS TO TIP DEMARCHE

REF: SECSTATE 194796

Classified By: DCM STEPHEN G. MCFARLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (d)

Summary

1. (C) Responding to reftel demarche regarding trafficking in persons, September 21, Venezuelan MFA officials insisted that the TIP report had not accurately assessed Venezuela's anti-trafficking initiatives under its treaty obligations with the United Nations. PolOff reiterated USG reasoning behind placing Venezuela on Tier 3, and emphasized that the Embassy had sought to obtain required information from the GOV, but had been unsuccessful. The MFA officials offered to provide information if the USG would consider removing Venezuela from Tier 3. When PolOff noted that such information would be welcome for next year's report, the MFA official retracted the offer. One official said the GOV does not give information to foreign governments, only to the United Nations, with whom it has a treaty responsibility. Septel will report GOV police update on TIPs to our legatt. End Summary.

2. (C) PolOff delivered reftel demarche to the MFA Director for International Organized Crime, Drugs and Corruption Ana Cazzadore on September 21. Also present were assistant to the Foreign Minister Magali Garcia, North American Office Director Rebeca Guevara, and USA Desk Officer Reynaldo Pulido. Cazzadore and Guevara insisted that the TIP report had not accurately assessed Venezuela's anti-trafficking initiatives under its treaty obligations with the United Nations. PolOff told the MFA officers that failure to cooperate with the TIP reporting system is taken as evidence of a problem, and that the Embassy had made efforts to obtain information from various GOV agencies, but had been unsuccessful. Guevara said the GOV does not give information to foreign governments, it only gives it to the United Nations, with whom it has assumed a treaty responsibility.

3. (C) PolOff pointed to our demarche delivered on June 14 which indicated the steps that needed to be taken to avoid sanctions. Cazzadore told PolOff that she chairs a semi-weekly meeting of 22 representatives from different GOV agencies on trafficking. She said there were serious problems implementing anti-trafficking initiatives in Venezuela because there was no law against it, and the Attorney General's office would not pursue it judicially. She said a law was being drafted. PolOff told Cazzadore that the Embassy was willing to work with the MFA to identify anti-trafficking initiatives, to ensure that next year's report was as accurate as possible.

4. (C) Guevara asked exactly what programs would be effected by the sanctions, and for clarification on whether the USG would oppose international loans. She noted that the reftel talking points clarified this question. Guevara insisted that the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 authorized the State Department to send an amended report at any time to Congress. She asked whether the Embassy would consider this, given her contention that the 2003 report was in error due to our not getting the correct information.

5. (C) Guevara pushed for a promise to consider re-classifying Venezuela this year, in return for information from the MFA from 2003 in a subsequent conversation on September 22. She would not commit to cooperation next year, however, insisting that the GOV does not provide information formally to other governments, only to the United Nations. Informal cooperation would depend on a higher level decision, she said, which would depend on our response to the question of re-classification. (Note: In a separate exchange with the Ministry of Labor regarding information for the human rights report, the GOV also told us to look to the United Nations for information.)

Comment

16. (C) The existence of an anti-trafficking task force at the MFA had not been mentioned in any previous meeting on the subject of trafficking in persons. If it indeed functions, it could serve as a clearinghouse of information on trafficking

for us in the future. The suggested quid pro quo -- making information available if we agree to take Venezuela off the list -- strikes us as unacceptable, but possibly the GOV will come up with a better offer. For the moment, it appears that the GOV is carrying out a two-pronged strategy: public assertions that it is cooperating with a higher authority, the United Nations, and not responding to Washington; and indications by Venezuelan law enforcement that it is responding to TIPS issues (septel).
Brownfield

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